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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

OK
East Germany: The number of East German refugees fleeing to West Berlin in the week of 13 to 19 April, against the background of the regime's drive against private farmers and businessmen, appears to have surpassed all records since the aftermath of the riots of 17 June 1953. As of 19 April, 2,734 persons, including large numbers of farmers and craftsmen, had been processed in the West Berlin refugee center, and refugee authorities reported that the actual influx for the week was double that figure. The apparently extreme concern of the Ulbricht regime over the mass exodus of its citizens is shown by the reported attempt of East German police--until stopped by the West German police--to question travelers and examine their baggage in West Berlin stations of the East German - operated elevated railroad. [REDACTED]

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

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OK
Laos: Progovernment elements are certain to win a majority in Sunday's elections for the 59-member National Assembly. The number of seats which will be won by the 20-odd Communist and pro-Communist candidates will depend in part on the amount of pressure put on voters by local army and police elements. The exclusion of all or virtually all leftists from the new assembly--whether by government rigging or as a result of a possible last-minute protest withdrawal by the leftists--would be likely to stimulate intensified guerrilla operations by the insurgents. [redacted]

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South Korea: [redacted] Opposition elements are refusing to accept the resignation of Rhee's cabinet as evidence of any real change in the government or as an indication of willingness by Rhee to satisfy the demands of the people. Lt. Gen. Song Yo-chan, commander of the troops enforcing martial law, has expressed the opinion that riots will resume in Seoul if the police do not change their present tactics. Rhee, meanwhile, is reported to have indicated he does not contemplate easing of police-state methods and has said those who demonstrated will be treated as traitors.] [redacted]

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III. THE WEST

OK
Cuba: The Cuban Labor Confederation is rent by dissension over Communist efforts to control it. Secretary General David Salvador is reported to be in hiding and may resign just before May Day to bring the issue to public attention. Castro officials reportedly are infuriated and fear that Salvador's action will

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interfere with the large demonstration of support for the regime
planned for 1 May. [REDACTED]

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Progovernment Elements May Win Sizable Majority
In Laotian Elections

Progovernment elements are expected to win a majority which may reach substantial proportions in elections on 24 April for the 59-member Laotian National Assembly. Approximately 120 candidates were at last report still in the race, including some 60 on the government-approved slate--composed mainly of members of former Premier Phoui's Rally of the Lao People (RLP) and the Committee for Defense of National Interests (CDNI)--and nine each from the Communist-front Neo Lao Hak Sat (NLHS) and the fellow-traveling Santiphab party. [An estimated 25 of the 40-odd independents are in reality RLP or CDNI followers who failed to gain acceptance on the government slate.] A few of the remaining independents are considered leftists who would probably vote with the NLHS if elected.

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The number of seats won by candidates or allies of the NLHS will depend in part on the amount of pressure exerted on the voters by local police and army units. [redacted]

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[redacted] admonishing them to assure free elections "in districts where no Santiphab or NLHS candidates are running," provides a strong if indirect indication that the government is in fact planning to manipulate the voting where Communist or pro-Communist candidates are seeking office.

The exclusion of all or virtually all leftists from the new assembly--whether by government rigging or as a result of a last-minute protest withdrawal by the leftists--would be likely to stimulate intensified guerrilla operations by the Communist Pathet Lao insurgents and would reflect adversely on Laos internationally. French, Indian, [and British] officials, for example, have already shown considerable concern. [redacted]

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[REDACTED]

South Korean Opposition Unappeased by Cabinet Resignation

[Opposition elements refuse to interpret the resignation of President Rhee's cabinet as evidence of any real change in the government or as an indication of willingness by Rhee to satisfy the demands of the people. Opposition Democratic party leader Chang Myon, the "lame duck" vice president defeated by Rhee's unpopular running mate Yi Ki-pung in the elections on 15 March, has called for "further demonstrations" and new elections. Rhee reportedly was angered by Yi's flight from Seoul during the rioting, and there has been some speculation that he may be replaced.]

[An uneasy calm appears to have settled over Seoul following the establishment of martial law. Army Chief of Staff Lt. Gen Song Yo-chan, commander of the troops enforcing martial law, has warned, however, that riots will probably break out again in the capital unless the police change their tactics. Earlier, Song who fears the police will try to blame the army for anything that goes wrong, commented that during the rioting the police had "lost their heads" and had been in a "frenzy."]

[There are strong indications that President Rhee neither comprehends the nature of the demonstrations nor appreciates the extent of popular resentment against his regime. A high-level Korean Government official reports that Rhee has indicated he does not contemplate easing "police-state" methods and intends to treat the demonstrators as national traitors. If former Rhee strong man Yi Pom-sok is included in the cabinet, it would lend weight to this report. Rhee apparently has interpreted statements of concern by President Eisenhower, Secretary Herter, and Ambassador McConaughy as interest in his own "welfare and safety" and has no strong impression of US disapproval of his methods. Bloc propaganda is exploiting the situation in South Korea, and free-world reaction is almost unanimously negative to the Rhee government.]

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In Japan, where South Korean developments are followed very closely, the government and press attribute the demonstrations to popular resentment over the elections and pent-up dissatisfaction with the regime's high-handed policies, as well as to economic factors. In an unofficial statement, Prime Minister Kishi discounted possible Communist instigation, although Foreign Ministry officials are concerned that the long-latent opposition to the Rhee government may develop into widespread disaffection which would be exploited by the Communists and eventually affect security in the Far East.)

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III. THE WEST

Cuban Labor Troubles Annoy Castro Regime

The Cuban Labor Confederation (CTC) is rent by bitter dis-
sension over Communist efforts to control it. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] CTC Secretary
General David Salvador is in hiding in Havana and is planning to
resign just before May Day in order to bring the issue to public
attention. Salvador was chosen by Fidel Castro to run Cuba's
strong labor movement as an important component of the revolu-
tion. He and some other labor leaders have resisted the Commu-
nists, with whom they have had previous experience. Castro in
recent months has endorsed the support given the Communists by
his brother Raul and Raul's protégé, pro-Communist Labor Min-
ister Martinez Sanchez.

Castro and his advisers are anxious to postpone a showdown
in the CTC until after the May Day rally they are staging to dem-
onstrate domestic and international support for the revolutionary
regime. They are infuriated by Salvador's action, which they see
as a threat to the rally's success. Martinez considers it impera-
tive that Salvador make a speech at the celebration.

Martinez evidently has already asked Conrado Becquer, head
of CTC's powerful sugar workers' federation who has avoided in-
volvement in the power struggle, to replace Salvador. Becquer,
opportunistic and politically astute, is reported to be reluctant
to accept and to have said that in the event he took the post, he
would demand government support for a non-Communist CTC di-
rectorate. The Castro government is unlikely to accept or hold
to such terms; if Becquer does replace Salvador, however, it
would indicate that he believes he can control the Communist la-
bor leaders, as he is too ambitious to share power with them.

[REDACTED]

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